

Culver's Joke

By Suse Clements Willis

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"I don't know any girls; simple reason," laughed Blake Narbel. "You see, the pater grew to be a woman hater after mother's death. We have retreated before civilization ever since."



ON THE STEP STOOD NARBEL AND THE GIRL OF THE PICTURE.

which clearly was not from the San Francisco firms with which he had business dealings. Culver laughed so heartily when he had read him the first few paragraphs that he had become silent, and he would read no more, devouring the contents, while Culver chuckled over the girlish letter the elderly spinster had indited. It was more like the letter of a schoolgirl than of a woman of forty.

It was a girlish letter, if not schoolgirlish, full of excuses and explanations that the writer had been tempted to answer because of the sincerity of the communication and Culver's recommendations. Culver reflected that it had been a capital letter and wondered how long he should let it run on before he should disillusionize Narbel with a prose portrait of Miss Lucy as he remembered her.

is passed and I am going off to keep it." "But she's forty if she's a day," pleaded Culver. "Surely, Blake, you don't want to marry a woman seven years older than yourself."

"I shan't have any woman saying that I broke faith," he said soberly. "The train from the mines is going down tomorrow. I shall go with it."

He went on with his writing, and Narbel good humoredly picked up a pen. There was a pack train going down from the mines tomorrow, and he could understand why Culver wanted to finish off the letters he was writing back east. The train went down one week and back the next, affording them bimonthly communication with the outside world.

"Whom shall I address it to?" he demanded. "Miss Lucy Mears," laughed Culver. Then two pens scratched over the paper. Culver's with easy, rapid movement, Narbel's painstakingly. He was less accustomed to writing, and Culver had flushed half a dozen letters before the other's pen was still.

Culver laughed over the effusion, in which the writer had pictured his dull life and had pleaded for permission to open a correspondence. He explained fully his relations with Culver as business partner and chum and hinted at possibilities of matrimony.

Had he been in earnest instead of merely seeking a means of killing time while Culver was occupied he could not have done better. In the morning Culver came across the sheets and, with a wicked chuckle, slipped them into an envelope and addressed them to Lucy Mears, anticipating that elderly lady's surprise when she should open the envelope back in the New England town.

Narbel, clearing up the table that evening, noted the absence of the sheets, but concluded that Culver had torn them up along with his own odd sheets and thought no more of the matter until a month later a letter came

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SARAH, HUSTLING HEROINE

By DONALD ALLEN

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"Look here, Jim" began Colville one evening, when her brother James came home to supper, "in walking past the tavern this afternoon I saw a strange young man."

"Yes, there is one there," was the reply. "Who is he?" "I can't tell you much about him. His name is Ripley, I believe, and he's come down from the city for a four weeks' vacation. He was asking me about boating and fishing."

James Halliday was a carpenter of the village of Branchville. His sister Sarah kept house for him. Sarah Halliday had lived for thirty-three years and no man had hinted of matrimony to her. She never pretended to good looks, but she always insisted that she was tender hearted and had emotion sufficient to make a great actress. Her failure to bring men to the point had rankled, and she had finally made up her mind to do a little hustling for a husband. She had seen the young man sitting on the hotel veranda with his feet cocked up on the railing, and he had at once been marked down. He had looked after her in an eager way, and she flattered herself that she had made an impression.

"If Mr. Ripley is all alone down here he must be lonesome," she said to her brother Jim after supper. "Yes, he may be."

"Then you'd better saunter up to the tavern and show him that you want to be friendly. You can bring in, if you want to, that I noticed him this afternoon. We've got the mill pond here, and we've got a boat and fishing tackle, and it seems our duty to make the stranger's stay as pleasant as possible. You know how you'd feel if you were away from home."

The brother dutifully obeyed orders. He found Mr. Ripley smoking a cigar on the veranda. He mentioned Sarah, the mill pond, the boat and the black bass waiting to be caught, and Mr. Ripley replied that he should surely take advantage of the situation. He didn't set any date, however, and when he came home to supper on the following evening the brother observed to the sister:

"What do you think, Sarah? That Susan Jones has somehow managed to get acquainted with the stranger, and he's over at her house playing croquet."

"Jim, you don't tell me that for a fact!" she gasped. "Of course I do!" "Humph! The freshness of Miss Susan Jones must be seen to at once."

And it was, Miss Sarah speedily donned another dress, fixed up a bit, and, leaving her brother to eat alone, she started for the Jones house. Mr. Ripley and Susan were just finishing their last game. Sarah walked up to Susan and whisperingly asked for an introduction and forced the issue. When she returned home Mr. Ripley accompanied her, and he didn't leave the house until 10 o'clock. He had made himself very agreeable, and when he had departed Jim observed:

"By thunder, Sarah, but 'sposin' you could marry a feller like him!" "I mean to!" was Sarah's laconic reply.

Again Jim was left to eat his evening meal alone while the sister started out with aggressive steps. She saw Tillie and Mr. Ripley at the gate while she was yet a long way off. She walked straight up to them and observed that it was a beautiful evening for seeing the mill dam and bore the stranger away. When the pouring waters of the dam had been sufficiently admired the young man was walked to the Halliday homestead and kept busy quoting poetry and drinking cider until 11 o'clock.

In the course of a couple of weeks at least half a dozen girls were introduced to Mr. Ripley by the landlord's wife, and each and every one of them set out for a flirtation with him. Each and every one of them came to grief, however. Sarah was in evidence, and when she butted in the others had to butt out. At the end of a fortnight she felt herself as good as engaged. Mr. Ripley had praised her strength and skill in rowing, her luck in fishing and her emotional temperament, and she had several times caught him glancing at her as a man only glances when his admiration is aroused. He had been asked to tea three or four times, and the two had boated and fished every afternoon, and all was going well.

"How's it coming out, Sarah?" asked brother Jim one morning at the breakfast table. "There's only one thing needed," she replied. "Haven't you noticed that he is always talking about heroes and heroines?" "Yes."

"If I were a heroine he'd pop the question inside of twenty-four hours." "But how can you be?" "I can't say just now, but I'm going to think it over during the day."

That afternoon she received a note from Mr. Ripley excusing himself from calling on the ground of a slight illness, and two hours after she had read the note she learned that he was sitting on the piazza with the Widow Phelps, who had had two husbands and wanted a third.

Sarah planned fast from that time on. Sarah had learned that Mr. Ripley arose and breakfasted at 8 o'clock. He then spent an hour on the veranda smoking and reading. The mill dam was not a hundred feet away and in plain view. Next morning as the young man on a vacation sat smoking, he heard some one calling his name. He looked up, and there was Sarah Halliday in an earless boat floating down upon the dam. She cried to him again and again, and it was plain to him that she must be swept over the falls and drowned. The best thing he could do, however, was to fall over his rocking chair and roll down the steps. Right under his eyes the boat went over the dam, and right under his eyes a sawmill man, who had never longed to be a hero, fished Sarah out with a long pole. She was a heroine, but insensible. They rolled her on a barrel. They dragged her around in the sawdust. They carried her home on a slab and sent for Jim and the doctor. She was wrung out and put to bed, and it was two days later when Jim was permitted to ask:

"Now, then, what in the old Harry were you doing in that boat at that hour in the morning?" "Rowing," she answered. "How came you to lose the oars?" "I wanted to be rescued."

"Oh, I see. You wanted to be a heroine, eh, and you wanted to give Ripley a chance to play the hero?" "Has he sent me any flowers?" she asked, avoiding a direct reply to his question. "Naw!"

"But he surely called?" "How could he call when he took a skate that very forenoon?" bluntly replied the brother. "Did he see me all wet and wopsy?" "Of course, and that's why he skated!" "Poor Sarah! She had hustled, but she had lost."

CITY NOTICES. premise, benefitted by the same which said lots, lands and premises are included in the special assessment district including all lots, lands and premises so benefitted, to-wit Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 in block 47, and lots 5, 6, 7 and 8 in block 42, in that part of the City of Astoria laid out and recorded by John McClure, and extended by Cyrus Olney in Clatsop County, Oregon.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT special assessment roll number 128, made for the purpose of defraying the costs and expenses of improving 10th street, from the south line of Commercial street to the north line of Exchange street, has been filed with the auditor and police judge and numbered special assessment roll number 128, and that the committee on streets and public ways has been appointed a committee of the council to sit with the board of assessors to examine, correct and equalize the same, and that Saturday, the 8th day of September, A. D. 1906, at the hour of 2 o'clock p. m. in the council chambers in the city hall, has been fixed as the time and place of the meeting of said board of equalization. All objections to said assessment must be presented in writing.

NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the assessment made for the construction of a sewer on 18th street, from a point 15 feet south of the north line of Grand avenue, to the south line of Exchange street, as per assessment roll number 125, was made by an order of the common council due and payable on the 8th day of September, 1906, by ordinance number 3277, confirming said assessment roll, that the following are the names of the persons against whom the assessment is made and the amount owing by each, to-wit:

Table listing names and amounts for assessment roll number 125, including Astoria Company, Bracker, Theo., Barker, Annie, Cramer, G. P., etc.

NOTICE TO IMPROVE. BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON Council of the City of Astoria: That said Council hereby declares its determination and intention to improve Exchange street from the west line of 9th street to a point eight feet west of the east line of 8th street. Said improvement shall be made by grading said street to the established grade to the full width thereof, constructing cement side walks on both sides thereof with corners on 8th street and with all necessary drainage. The side walk shall be six feet wide with a two foot park space between the curb and the edge of the side walk, and from curb to curb the street shall be graded nine inches below the sub grade with a sufficient crown in the center and filled in and macadamized with crushed rock to the depth of nine inches when thoroughly rolled and gutters shall be constructed on both sides of the street.

Table listing names and amounts for assessment roll number 124, including Aho, Paul, Bostrom, Hanna, Bynny, August, etc.

Table listing names and amounts for assessment roll number 127, including Lucason, Helen, Matlin, Michael, Mathsen, Henry, etc.

NOTICE. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT special assessment roll number 127, made for the purpose of defraying the costs and expenses of improving Duane street from the west line of 10th street to the west line of 6th street, has been filed with the auditor and police judge, and numbered special assessment roll number 127, and that the committee on streets and public ways has been appointed a committee of the council to sit with the board of assessors, to examine, correct and equalize the same, and that Saturday, the 8th day of September, A. D. 1906, at the hour of 2 o'clock p. m. in the council chambers in the city hall has been fixed as the time and place of the meeting of said board of equalization. All objections to said assessment must be presented in writing.

Table listing names and amounts for assessment roll number 127, including Anderson, Geo., Astoria Company, Bracker, Theo., etc.

NOTICE TO IMPROVE. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the assessment made for the improvement of 4th street, from the north line of Astor street, to the south line of railroad track, as per assessment roll number 123, was made by an order of the common council due and payable on the 8th day of September, 1906, by ordinance number 3278, confirming said assessment roll, that the following are the names of the persons against whom the assessment is made and the amount owing by each, to-wit:

Table listing names and amounts for assessment roll number 123, including Astoria Iron Works, Astoria Savings Bank, Davis, C. A., etc.

NOTICE TO IMPROVE. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the assessment made for the construction of a drain on Melbourne avenue from the alley-way running through block 17, to a point 70 feet south of the south line of Taylor avenue, as per assessment roll number 124, was made by an order of the common council due and payable on the 8th day of September, 1906, by ordinance number 3276, confirming said assessment roll, that the following are the names of the persons against whom the assessment is made, and the amount owing by each, to-wit:

Table listing names and amounts for assessment roll number 124, including Angberg, Aleda, Aho, Paul, Bostrom, Hanna, etc.

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